

**Testimony of Gretchen Raffa, Community Organizer,
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England**
in support of HB 5314 *An Act Concerning Child Safe Products and Banning Cadmium in
Children's Products*

Senator Musto, Representative Urban and members of the Select Committee on Children, my name is Gretchen Raffa, Community Organizer for Planned Parenthood of Southern New England testifying in support of HB 5314 *An Act Concerning Child Safe Products and Banning Cadmium in Children's Products*. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England's mission is to protect the right of all individuals to control their own fertility. Over the past decade new studies demonstrate that environmental contaminants and exposure to chemicals can have a detrimental effect on one's reproductive health. As a trusted provider of reproductive health care to over 70,000 patients every year we are committed to educating ourselves and patients about the dangers and health risks from exposure to chemicals for women and their families.

Mounting scientific evidence shows some industrial chemicals act as endocrine disruptors which can cause serious risks for women's health such as infertility, breast cancer, polycystic ovarian syndrome, uterine fibroids, endometriosis, miscarriage and shortened lactation. Hazardous chemicals in everyday products such as cosmetics, personal care products cleaning products, and our environment get into women's bodies, their breast milk, and in their uterus. The timing and level of exposure to these chemicals can affect how a woman's body develops and functions.

What research confirms is more women are experience difficulty in conceiving and maintaining a pregnancy, which affected 40% more women in 2002 than in 1982. The incidence of reported difficulty has almost doubled in younger women, ages 18-25ⁱ.ⁱⁱ There is evidence of a growing trend in the U.S. toward earlier breast development and onset of menstruation in girls. Studies suggest that endocrine-disrupting chemicals, particularly estrogen mimics are important factors associated with altered puberty timing.ⁱⁱⁱ Cadmium, a metal used in batteries, metal coatings and plastics has been linked to reduced sperm motility and to gynecological disorders such as endometriosis.^{iv} Yet no chemicals are currently regulated under the Toxic Substances Control Act because of their potential harm to reproduction or development. But other authoritative bodies have listed more than 50 industrial chemicals as reproductive toxins.^v

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England and those working to promote reproductive justice have long fought for a woman's right to control her reproductive destiny. We have a growing concern that the complexities of a woman's environment, including her physical geography, race, class, access to healthcare, place of employment to name a few, can play a debilitating role on her fertility and reproductive health. This is why we have turned our attention to the environmental toxins that are affecting the ability of women to become pregnant, have a healthy pregnancy, and give birth to a healthy child.

The time is now to reduce exposure to chemicals for children and women of childbearing age. We urge you to support HB 5314 *An Act Concerning Child Safe Products and Banning Cadmium in Children's Products*. We at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England believe this is an urgent matter of reproductive justice. All women should be guaranteed the right to control their own fertility, bear healthy babies and live in safe and healthy communities. Thank you.

ⁱ Anjani Chandra and Elizabeth Hervey Stephen, "Impaired Fecundity in the United States: 1982-1995," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 30, no 1, (1998): 34-42.

ⁱⁱ Kate Brett, "Fecundity in 2002 National Survey of Family Growth Women 15—24 Years of Age," Hyattsville, MD, National Center for Health Statistics (2008)

ⁱⁱⁱ Susan W. Euling, et al., "Role of Environmental Factors in the Timing of Puberty," *Pediatrics*, 121, S3 (February 2008): S167-71.

^{iv} Tracey J. Woodruff, et al., "Proceedings of the Summit on Environmental Challenges to Reproductive Health and Fertility: Executive Summary," *Fertil Steril*, 89, no. 2 (February 2008): 281-300.

^v California Environmental Protection Agency, "Proposition 65: The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986," Chemicals Known to the State to Cause Cancer or Reproductive Toxicity List as of September 11, 2009